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MEETING CALENDAR

The public is welcome to attend the following transportation-related meetings. A photo ID is usually required for access to meeting sites.

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

July 12 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council. *Conference Room 1. 3:00 PM*

July 20 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM*

Calendar cont. on p. 2

MPO to Release Draft Spending Documents for Public Review

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS SCHEDULED

On June 29 the Boston Region MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee spelled out its draft program providing for \$5.8 million in planning work and studies when it approved for public review the draft fiscal year 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

The Committee also began its discussion of the draft fiscal years 2007–2010 Transportation Improvement Program

and Air Quality Conformity Determination (TIP). The Committee released the TIP for public comment at its July 6 meeting. A 30-day public comment period for the two documents begins on July 17.

The UPWP programs funds for surface-transportation planning studies and other transportation-related activities to be conducted by MPO staff during the federal fiscal year. The TIP is a four-year capital spending program for improvements to the region's transportation system. These

documents are prepared annually as part of the MPO's planning process.

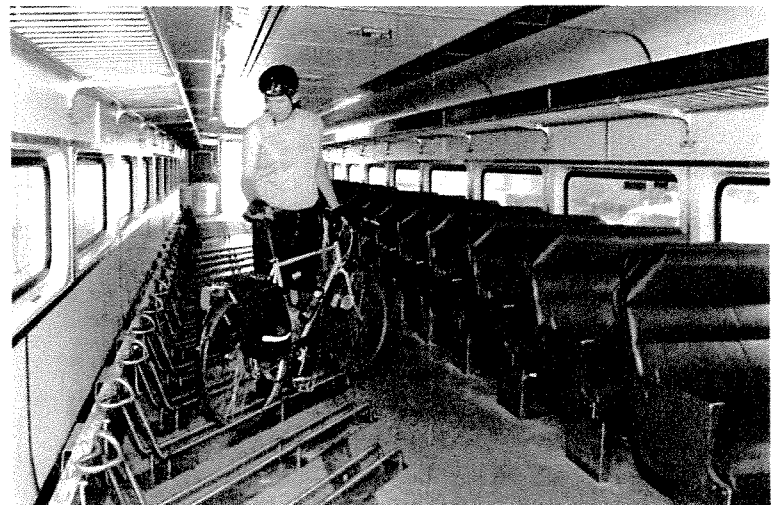
In developing the TIP, the Committee carefully evaluates proposed projects using its TIP criteria: existing condition, safety, mobility, community, environment, economic development, and land use. Project cost and readiness are also important factors. Limited funding makes for a difficult decision-making process.

• Documents *cont. on p. 6*

Commuter Rail Bike Coach in Service

The many bicyclists using commuter rail to access Cape Ann's beautiful coastline will soon find their trip easier. In order to better accommodate bicyclists using the Rockport commuter rail line during the summer, the MBTA has added bicycle racks to one of its commuter rail coaches. The renovated coach accommodates 39 bicycles and 42 passengers.

Before the bike coach enters regular service, it will make its debut on July 2 on the Fitchburg commuter rail line, serving bicyclists going to the 47th annual Fitchburg Longsjo Classic bicycle race.



A bicyclist uses the new bike racks on the renovated commuter rail coach

The coach begins its regular weekend service on the Rockport Line on July 8. Departing from Boston's North Station, the coach will

be available on the 10:15 AM and 2:15 PM trains to Rockport. Departing from

• Bike Coach *cont. on p. 2*

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Executive Office of Transportation, Cities of Boston, Everett, Newton, and Salem, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, Massachusetts Highway Department, Massachusetts Port Authority, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Towns of Bedford, Framingham, and Hopkinton

Urban Ring Moving Forward under EOT

The Circumferential Transportation Improvements in the Urban Ring Corridor project is a phased set of transit improvements in a corridor just outside downtown Boston. The Urban Ring corridor runs generally in a loop through fast-growing areas of Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Medford, and Somerville.

The Urban Ring project is intended to improve access and reduce travel times to these areas, reduce automobile travel and congestion in the corridor, facilitate economic development in the corridor, and reduce congestion in central Boston's subway system.

A major investment study for

the Urban Ring project was completed in 2001. This study identified the Urban Ring corridor and trip generators and made preliminary recommendations for the phasing of the project. Phase 1 entails circumferential crosstown bus routes in the corridor; Phase 2 would add six bus rapid transit routes, additional crosstown and express commuter bus routes, and improved connections to radial transit lines; Phase 3 would add rail service in the western section of the corridor.

The MBTA issued a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for Phase 2 in November 2004. Since the release of the DEIR, financial responsibility for major expansion of the MBTA sys-

tem has been transferred to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) has assumed planning responsibility for major transit expansion projects.

In keeping with these changes, EOT's Office of Transportation Planning (OTP) has restarted the Urban Ring environmental review process. OTP has reconvened the Urban Ring Citizens Advisory Committee, which will hold a meeting on Tuesday, July 25, 2006, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM at 10 Park Plaza, Conference Rooms 2 and 3. OTP has also issued a Request for Responses for completing a Revised DEIR/Draft Environmental Impact Statement; responses are due on July 14, 2006.

Walkway Construction Begins at South Station

Customers walking between the South Station rail and bus terminals will soon be protected from Boston's harsh winters and humid summers. The MBTA and South Station Union LLC-Hines Development have reached an agreement to construct an enclosed walkway between the two terminals.

The walkway will improve the connection from the rail terminal along Track 1 to a new entrance at the bus terminal. It will allow customers to avoid traversing the winding staircase at Atlantic Avenue and will provide direct access to the elevators and escalators at the bus terminal. Construction recently began on the walkway, and officials expect to complete the project by the fall.

Hines Development is planning an \$800 million, 1.8-million-square-foot mixed-use development over the train tracks at South Station. With construction scheduled to begin in 2007 (pending financing and local permitting), the development will include several improvements to the transportation infrastructure below it. These improvements will include the aforementioned enclosed walkway, an expansion of the bus terminal, improved rail yard ventilation, and a full upgrade to the station's power center.

Rockport Line Bike Coach

● Bike Coach *cont. from p. 1*

Rockport, the coach will be available on the 12:00 PM and 5:10 PM trains to Boston. The bike coach is a summer service and is provided only on Saturdays and Sundays.

On other commuter rail trips, bicycles are permitted anytime except during weekday rush hours. Folding bicycles, when folded, are allowed on commuter rail trains at any time.

The introduction of the bike coach is a component of the MBTA's Bikes on the T program. For more information on the program, visit www.mbta.com.

Calendar cont. from p. 1

July 25 (Tuesday)

Urban Ring Citizens Advisory Committee. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 4:00 PM*

July 26 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 1:00 PM*

July 31 (Monday)

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee. *Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3. 4:30 PM*

August 1 (Tuesday)

Boston Region MPO Open House and TIP/UPWP Review Workshop. *MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. Two sessions: 1:00 PM and 5:30 PM*

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

July 13 (Thursday)

TOD Infrastructure and Housing Program Informational Meeting. *Conference Room D, 100 Cambridge Street, 2nd Floor, Boston. 2:00 PM. To RSVP, e-mail jane.healey@state.ma.us.*

July 20 (Thursday)

MassHighway Public Hearing: Proposed Boundary Street Bridge Replacement Project. *Science Lecture Hall, Marlborough High School, 431 Bolton Street, Marlborough. 7:00 PM*

TOD Infrastructure and Housing Program Informational Meeting. *Conference Room D, 100 Cambridge Street, 2nd Floor, Boston. 2:00 PM. To RSVP, e-mail jane.healey@state.ma.us.*

July 25 (Tuesday)

Boston Region MPO TIP/UPWP Review Workshop. *Room 421, Malden Government Center, 200 Pleasant Street, Malden. 6:30 PM*

July 26 (Wednesday)

Boston Region MPO TIP/UPWP Review Workshop. *Hingham Town Hall, South Hearing Room, 210 Central Street, Hingham. 6:30 PM*

July 27 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO TIP/UPWP Review Workshop. *Wellesley Free Library, 530 Washington Street, Wellesley. 6:30 PM*

The Interstate Highway System at 50

The Interstate Highway System reached a major milestone on June 29: the 50th anniversary of President Eisenhower's signing of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. The act allocated nearly \$33.5 billion for the construction of 41,000 miles of an interstate highway system, the largest public works project in history.

The act provided for 90-percent-federal funding of interstate highway projects, requiring a 10 percent state match. Since 1956, 46,837 miles of interstate highway have been constructed in

the United States.

The nearly completed system cost \$130 billion. After 50 years, only one segment of the original interstate highway system remains to be built. A project to close the final gap in I-95 north of Philadelphia, including a connection to the Pennsylvania Turnpike, is in the design stage.

Public opposition to planned highways led to the canceling of several highway projects in the Boston region. In the 1960s a portion of I-95, origi-

nally slated to cut through several neighborhoods in Boston, and I-695, an inner beltway circling the central city, were two projects canceled by state and federal transportation officials.

In 1970 Governor Sargent implemented a moratorium on highway construction within Route 128, recognizing the destructive impacts of urban highway development.

Boston's Central Artery/Tunnel project is considered to have been the most complex engineering challenge in

the history of the Interstate Highway System.

Much of the American landscape has been shaped by highways over the last 50 years. Today, trucks carry tens of billions of tons of freight throughout the nation on its highways. Circumferential expressways around urban centers encourage the dispersion of housing and commerce throughout metropolitan areas.

For more information on the Interstate Highway System's golden anniversary, visit www.fhwa.dot.gov/interstate.



Boston Region MPO Activities

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization, at its June 29 and July 6 meetings, took votes on the proposed programs of transportation studies and improvement projects to be included in the draft fiscal year (FY) 2007 Unified Planning Work Program and the draft FYs 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Both documents will be released for a 30-day public comment period to begin on July 17 (see p. 1 for details). Also at the July 6 meeting, the Committee approved an adjustment to the FY 2006 element of the current TIP, waiving the public comment period. Visit www.bostonmpo.org for more information.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

At their June meeting, Regional Transportation Advisory Council members and their guests listened to staff briefings on the development of the draft FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the draft FYs 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Member comments were sought on these two documents.

The Advisory Council also received a briefing from the Department of Conser-

vation and Recreation (DCR) on the proposed Storrow Drive Tunnel reconstruction project. DCR is considering four sets of alternatives to reconstructing this portion of the roadway.

Upon the conclusion of the public involvement process, which began in February, the project will undergo an extensive Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review. DCR is currently planning to start construction in the spring of 2009. For more information, visit www.mass.gov/dcr/storrowdrive.htm.

At its July meeting, the Advisory Council is scheduled to continue discussions of the

TIP and UPWP. The Advisory Council's Freight Committee will not meet during the months of July and August.

For more information, please contact Bill Moore of the Boston Region MPO staff at (617) 973-7144 or bill.moore@ctps.org, or visit the Advisory Council's Web page on the Boston Region MPO's Web site at www.bostonmpo.org.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

The June AACT meeting featured MBTA General Manager Daniel Grabauskas, who spoke on accessibility issues throughout the transit

system. He stated that accessibility is one of his top priorities for the system. MBTA staff are listening to accessibility concerns and acting upon them. Also, MBTA staff will participate in hands-on training to better serve those with accessibility concerns. The MBTA has recently committed to spending \$450 million on accessibility improvements throughout the system in FYs 2007-2011.

The General Manager commended AACT on its commitment to transit accessibility and encouraged its members to continue to push for further progress.

North Station Concourse to Expand

Commuter rail customers north of Boston will soon have an expanded and upgraded area in which to wait for their trains at North Station.

The MBTA has partnered with Delaware North Companies—Boston, owner of the TD Banknorth Garden, to develop a plan to expand the concourse at North Station to 20,000

square feet, more than double its existing size. The additional space will be built over 80 feet of existing tracks below the arena.

The concourse expansion will provide more tables, chairs, and benches, relieve crowding, and make way for new station amenities, including additional food, beverage, and

service vendors, an electronic board with up-to-the-minute schedule information, and larger restrooms.

The expansion plans are in response to MBTA customer requests over the years for a larger and upgraded waiting area at North Station. The MBTA had originally planned to expand the concourse on

the site of the old Boston Garden, on which it had an easement. After waiting 10 years for the opportunity to construct the concourse within a new development, the MBTA released its easement as part of an agreement with Delaware North Companies—Boston to undertake the new concourse project.

Delaware North Companies—Boston will pay for the station expansion and its maintenance, and will split additional vendor revenue with the MBTA. Construction has already begun, and work on the concourse will be completed in December. The station will remain open during the renovations.



Rendering of the North Station concourse expansion

North Station is the southern terminus for 187 weekday commuter rail trains and serves approximately 50,000 passengers per weekday. In addition to MBTA service, the station also hosts Amtrak's Downeaster train service to Portland, Maine.

Logan Environmental Status and Planning Report Available for Public Comment

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs is inviting public comment on the 2004 Logan International Airport Environmental Status and Planning Report (ESPR), filed by the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) last month. Produced every five years under the state's environmental review process, the ESPR is one of the documents used to determine the cumulative environmental impacts of Logan's operation.

The report provides information on activity levels at Logan in 2004—including aircraft operations, passenger traffic, fleet mix, and mail and cargo volumes—and the status of projects underway or com-

pleted at the airport that year. It documents environmental conditions resulting from airport operations, along with historical data back to 1990 for comparison, and environmental mitigation measures taken to reduce noise, improve air quality, and minimize pollution entering ground or surface waters.

Twenty-six million airline passengers traveled through Logan in 2004, and by 2020 the annual flow of passengers is expected to grow to nearly 43 million. Long-range plans to meet the future demand are also described in the ESPR, which outlines projects underway or under consideration through 2020 and provides data on anticipated

operation levels and potential environmental conditions. Future plans include projects to modernize terminals, construct new maintenance facilities and hangars, upgrade the airfield, improve landscaping and lighting in buffer areas near communities, and increase parking capacity.

Massport's goals for improving the airport's environmental practices are also outlined in the ESPR. The agency's plans include implementing a recycling program in terminals, retrofitting or purchasing heavy-duty equipment with diesel oxidation catalysts (DOCs) or particulate filters, and creating a policy that requires that alternative-fuel vehicles be considered when

new vehicles are purchased.

Another goal is to have new development projects at the airport strive for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, which is given to projects that comply with green building practices. Massport and Delta Air Lines are already seeking LEED certification for the new Terminal A, which opened in March 2005.

Public comments are invited through July 21, 2006. Comments should be sent to the Secretary of Environmental Affairs and make reference to Logan ESPR—EOEA #3247.

The report is available for download at www.massport.com.

Leave the Car Behind on Your Summer Vacation

Avoid traffic congestion and high fuel prices by leaving your car home during your vacation. Public transportation options are available out of Boston that will take you to seaside destinations near or far while someone else does the driving.

BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS

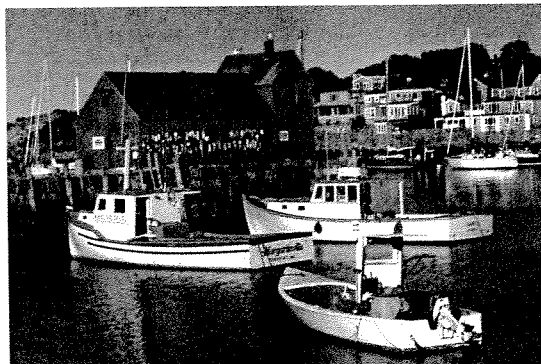
The Boston Harbor Islands national park area is only a 20-minute boat trip away. Several of the park's 34 islands can be reached by ferry.

Harbor Islands Express runs a ferry daily to Georges Island from May to October. From Georges Island, free

fares are \$10 Monday–Wednesday and \$12 Thursday–Sunday. Children aged 3–11 ride for \$7 at all times, and children under 3 ride free. Reduced family rates are also available. For more information, visit www.bostonislands.org.

PROVINCETOWN FERRY

If Cape Cod or Provincetown is your destination, you have several options to avoid the traffic tie-ups at the Bourne and Sagamore bridges. The Bay State Cruise Company's high-speed catamaran, *Provincetown III*, which began operating in the summer of



Rockport Harbor

Rockport Harbor, and Gloucester Harbor. If you're headed to Crane Beach, the Ipswich Essex Explorer shuttle (funded by the Boston Region MPO) serves beachgoers from the Ipswich commuter rail station. For more

information, visit www.ipswich-essexexplorer.com.

Bicycles are allowed on commuter rail trains except during weekday rush hours (see the bike coach article on page 1 for a new addition to the Rockport Line).

AMTRAK DOWNEASTER

Pining for the shores of Maine? Amtrak's Downeaster, leaving out of North Station, makes several daily runs to Portland. Stop at Old Orchard Beach to enjoy the beachside amusement park and arcades. Or go all the way to Portland to experience the city's historic downtown, vibrant arts and cultural scene, and working waterfront. For reservations call 1-800-USA-RAIL or visit www.amtrak.com.

CAT FERRY TO NOVA SCOTIA

If Maine isn't far enough away for you, connect in Portland to the CAT, a high-speed car ferry that runs across the Gulf of Maine to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, in under six hours. Through mid-October, the CAT departs from Portland at 2:30 PM and Yarmouth at 9:00 AM Friday–Sunday. For reservations call 1-877-359-3760 or visit www.catferry.com.



Boston Harbor Cruises' high-speed catamaran, *Salacia*.

interisland shuttles take passengers to Lovell's, Peddocks, Grape, Bumpkin, and—newly open to the public this summer—Spectacle Island. Visitors can enjoy historic sites, picnicking, camping, walking trails, and nature viewing, all within sight of the skyscrapers of downtown Boston.

The ferry leaves Long Wharf every hour from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekdays and every half hour from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM on weekends. Adult

2004, reaches the tip of Cape Cod in 90 minutes.

The boat departs daily from the pier across from the World Trade Center at 8:00 AM, 1:00 PM, and 5:30 PM and returns from Provincetown at 10:00 AM, 3:00 PM, and 7:30 PM. The pier can be reached by the Silver Line Waterfront. Round-trip fares are \$68 for adults, \$65 for seniors, and \$50 for children (aged 3–12). There is a \$10 fee to bring a bicycle.

Boston Harbor Cruises also offers a high-speed ferry service to Provincetown aboard its catamaran, *Salacia*. It departs from Long Wharf in Boston at 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM and returns from Provincetown at 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM Monday–Wednesday. Thursday–Sunday there is an additional trip from Boston at 6:30 PM, departing Provincetown at 8:30 PM. Round-trip fares are \$70 for adults, \$65 for seniors, and \$60 for children (aged 4–12). There is a \$5 fee each way to bring a bicycle.

If the boat ride itself is a big part of your “destination,” the Bay State Cruise Company's *Provincetown II* makes a three-hour journey to Provincetown on weekends, leaving Boston at 9:30 AM and returning at 3:30 PM. The round-trip fare is \$29 for adults, children ride free, and there is a \$10 fee for bicycles.

TRAINS TO MASSACHUSETTS BEACHES

Riding the rails is another way to get to the shore. The MBTA's Newburyport/Rockport commuter rail line will get you within walking or biking distance of Singing Beach in Manchester-by-the-Sea,

FHWA, FTA Release Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for MPOs

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are proposing regulations to implement the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The United States Department of Transportation has published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Metropolitan Transportation Planning in the *Federal Register* for public comment.

The new regulations call for MPOs to advance their planning processes to add, expand, or emphasize certain planning topics and activities. These include security, safety, operations and maintenance, system management, congestion management, consultations with other agencies and governments, and bicycle and pedestrian issues. The regulations also ask MPOs to consider environmental mitigation methods available (not at the project level) and to use

contemporary communication methods in public involvement.

The Boston Region MPO is refining its planning processes to incorporate the new elements.

To download the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, visit <http://dmses.dot.gov/doc/images/p85/401042.pdf>. Comments must be received by the Department of Transportation by September 7, 2006.

Documents for Public Review

Documents cont. from p. 1

The MPO has organized four workshops around the region to hear residents' and local officials' views on these spending programs (see the meeting calendar on pages 1 and 2 for details).

The draft documents will be made available to the public on July 17. Compact discs (CDs) containing the documents will be sent to municipal officials, public libraries,

and legislators of each of the 101 cities and towns in the Boston region. The documents will also be posted as PDF files on the MPO's Web site, www.bostonmpo.org. In addition, copies may be requested in CD, print, or accessible formats: contact the Boston Region MPO staff by mail at 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116-3968, by voice at (617) 973-7100, by TTY at (617) 973-7089, or by e-mail at public

information@bostonmpo.org.

The public comment period will close at 5:00 PM on August 15. The MPO is scheduled, after considering public comments, to approve final versions of the documents on August 17.

TRANSREPORT

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